



## Nelly Mbajah

**ELAC Representation:** Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)-Children's Administration

**Occupation:** Early Childhood Development Program Manager

**City/Region:** Olympia, WA

### Getting to know YOU:

#### **What drew you to early learning?**

I always knew I wanted to work for children in some capacity. I was going to be a neonatal intensive care nurse until I stumbled into my first early education and child development class. I realized I could make a career out of making sure all children had an opportunity to play, explore and ultimately learn in a safe healthy environment and I have never looked back.

#### **How do you hope to influence a stronger early learning system for Washington?**

There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace." ~Kofi Annan.

I love this quote and it encompasses what I hope I can be a part of achieving which is being a voice for children who desperately need to be part of an early learning system because it may be their only safe, nurturing, consistent and healthy environment.

#### **What was your first job?**

Big sister Nelly was my first official title and fulltime job...it still is! 😊 Auntie Nelly is the new title I wear proudly.



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**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

I remember telling my parents for as long as I could remember that I was going to be a mother and pediatrician.

Everyone was a patient and needed medicine (juice/water) to get better and an injection when they did not listen. I would cut an opening in my dolls mouths and feed them at the same time I was eating needless to say they didn't smell very good after a while.

**What is your favorite childhood memory?**

It is hard to pick on family memory. I always remember being surrounded by extended family, love, food and laughter. If I had to pick one it would be a family vacation to a place called Mamba Village. It was the first vacation I remember us taking as a family that did not involve visiting relatives. My four siblings and I fed crocodiles and rode on camels.